

## WNV MOSQUITOES AREN'T GOING AWAY

On August 26, Fort Detrick staffs received notification that a single pool of 9 *Culex sp.* mosquitoes collected near the Nallin Pond area tested positive for West Nile Virus (WNV). *Culex sp.* mosquitoes are the most common type in this area, are generally active only at dusk and dawn, and are not categorized as aggressive biters.

Despite this recent finding, Fort Detrick Industrial Hygiene / Environmental Health Office staff remain confident that the mosquito control measures implemented, including the treatment of potential mosquito breeding areas with Altosid®, an environmentally safe laravicide, continue to be extremely effective in reducing the number of mosquitoes at Fort Detrick. The average number of trapped mosquitoes has significantly declined since 2002 when WNV was first found at Fort Detrick (32.2 mosquitoes per trap/per night during FY02; 9.7 per trap/night in FY03; and 2.4 per trap/night in FY04), and continuous surveys have indicated the absence of mosquito larvae at known breeding sites. Additionally, following trapping activities conducted on August 17, but prior to being notified of the WNV positive pool on August 26, surveillance was increased and laravicide was reapplied to potential breeding areas when a slight increase in the number of trapped mosquitoes was noted. Subsequent trapping conducted on August 24 failed to collect even a single mosquito from the Nallin Pond area.

Although not considered to pose a significant health risk to the Fort Detrick community, the positive WNV finding should nonetheless serve as a reminder that WNV infected mosquitoes are in the region to stay and all personnel are highly encouraged to continue taking measures to eliminate mosquito breeding areas and avoid being bitten by mosquitoes, including:

- Taking corrective measures if you see areas or objects around buildings or homes that could collect and hold water (clean and/or store upside-down any water collecting containers such as buckets, flowerpots, cigarette ash/butt containers).
- Maintaining wading pools, birdbaths, and pet dishes to ensure water does not collect and stagnate in them. Small wading pools should be emptied after each use and ornamental ponds should be aerated and/or stocked with fish.
- Ensuring covers on outdoor furniture, play sets, lawn tools, and other equipment do not collect pockets of water.
- Cleaning and maintaining gutters so that they drain properly and ensure water does not collect at the bottom of drain spouts.
- Avoiding or minimize mosquito bites by reducing time spent outdoors when mosquitoes are most active (dawn and dusk).
- Wearing long pants, long sleeves, shoes, and socks if you are outdoors when mosquitoes are active.
- Using a mosquito repellent that contains DEET on exposed skin (read label precautions carefully to ensure proper use for children and pregnant women). Effective repellents contain 20-35% DEET, noting that products with high concentrations of DEET (greater than 35%) should be avoided, especially by children.
- Ensuring screens on doors and windows are in good condition and fit tightly.
- Not relying on ineffective or unproven measures to avoid mosquito bites (Vitamin B, 'ultrasonic' devices, and bug zappers).

As a reminder, please do not attempt to collect any birds or mosquitoes yourself. If you spot actual or potential mosquito breeding sites, contact the IH/EH Office at 301-619-7471. If you find a dead bird, contact the Work Order Desk at 301-619-2726.

Want more information? Visit the Environmental Health – West Nile Virus site at:  
<http://www.detrick.army.mil/detrick/tenants/ih/ehwnv.cfm>.